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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 11 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat and has the honour to inform that the Government of Nigeria has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at elections to be held on 9 May 2006, and to this end submits herewith its pledges and commitments for the protection and promotion of human rights in conformity with operative paragraph 8 of resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 (see annex).

Nigeria is firmly committed to its belief in the principles of dignity and equality of all human beings and seeks the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction. In this connection, Nigeria is signatory to all United Nations conventions and treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

Nigeria has contributed immensely to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights at subregional and regional levels, and has been in the forefront for reform of the United Nations human rights machinery to ensure that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is accorded the importance it deserves. Nigeria is convinced that its membership in the Human Rights Council will contribute significantly to the realization of the noble goals and objectives of the Human Rights Council.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 11 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat, and further to its note of 11 April 2006, by which the Government of Nigeria announced its candidacy to the Human Rights Council, has the honour to forward herewith the text of the pledges and commitments of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in support of its candidacy to the Human Rights Council (see enclosure) at elections to be held in New York on 9 May 2006, and to request that it be issued as a document of the General Assembly.

Enclosure

Human Rights Council: Nigeria's voluntary pledges and commitments

The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Strongly welcomes the establishment of the Human Rights Council;

Commits itself to the purposes and objectives of the Human Rights Council;

Undertakes to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and through active participation in the work of the Council, and in cooperation with members of the Council, non-members as well as regional organizations and civil society, to make the Council a credible, strong, fair and effective United Nations human rights body;

Expresses its readiness to submit itself to the universal periodic review mechanism;

Pledges to cooperate with the treaty monitoring bodies of the Council, including through submission of timely periodic reports and the implementation of concluding observations and recommendations;

Pledges to contribute actively to the development of human rights culture and the integration of human rights into United Nations activities as well as regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States;

Reaffirms its determination and commitment to continue to promote and protect human rights at home by strengthening and actively supporting the work of the National Human Rights Commission, in order to make it more effective in carrying out its mandate;

Expresses its determination to continue to play, at regional and international levels, a responsible and leading role in the promotion and protection of peace, stability and democracy;

Commits itself to the promotion and protection of all human rights, particularly civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights including the right to development;

Reaffirms its commitment to work for the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

Reaffirms its commitment to the maintenance of an open door policy on human rights issues and to this end, reaffirms its preparedness to welcome human rights inspectors, special rapporteurs and representatives to visit Nigeria in order to carry out their respective mandates without hindrance;

Reaffirms its commitment to cooperate fully with other special procedures of the Council and to work towards upholding the rule of law and to encourage constructive dialogue and international cooperation in the field of human rights;

Reaffirms its commitment to uphold the principles of non-discrimination and the protection and promotion of the human rights of all its citizens and to this end, to accelerate the process of full domestication of relevant international human rights conventions including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Reaffirms its commitment to the following international human rights instruments which it has ratified without any reservations:

- ✓ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- ✓ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- ✓ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- ✓ Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- ✓ Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ✓ ILO Convention 182 on Elimination of Child Labour;
- ✓ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- ✓ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- ✓ Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes ;
- ✓ Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air;
- ✓ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children;
- ✓ Protocol Against Manufacture, Sale and Trafficking in Firearms and their parts;
- ✓ Convention Against Corruption;
- ✓ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

Undertakes to accede, as soon as practicable, to the International Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Family and to examine the possibility, in the near future, of signing, ratifying or acceding to human rights instruments to which Nigeria is not yet a signatory, including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

Undertakes to continue to uphold the provisions of the Conventions, Protocols or Covenants to which it has ratified and pledges to regularly report on their implementation to the treaty monitoring bodies of the Human Rights Council.

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Note verbale dated 4 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him that Lebanon has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held in New York on 9 May 2006 during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Lebanon's candidature to the newly established Council stems from its belief in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, which are enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution as universal and binding norms and which constitute the underpinnings of its diverse society.

In presenting its candidature, Lebanon reaffirms its strong faith in the United Nations system and pledges to work diligently with the Human Rights Council and all Member States to secure further the effective recognition and observance of human rights.

Indeed, Lebanon played a key role in the drafting committee for the Universal Declaration through a leading Lebanese figure who, at a later stage, chaired the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for two consecutive terms (1951-1952). Another Chairperson from Lebanon presided over the eighteenth session of the Commission on Human Rights in 1962.

Furthermore, Lebanon's engagement continued through its accession to an extensive number of conventions and covenants, the latest of which are:

- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Lebanon's candidature comes against a backdrop of a unique experience of freedom, interactive dialogue, tolerance and respect for differences, which Lebanon has consistently demonstrated throughout its history. It coincides with an ambitious, multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for Human Rights adopted by the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights. A phased implementation process has already been initiated with the support of the Lebanese Government.

Mindful of the comprehensive and indivisible nature of human rights and the responsibilities of States as regards human rights, the Government of Lebanon collaborated jointly with the Parliament, civil society, relevant stakeholders, and international organizations to ensure that the above-mentioned National Plan complies with the highest international standards of human rights.

Lebanon has achieved tangible results in the fields of civil, political, social and cultural rights; and its people are committed to upholding the ideals of freedom, justice and peace and to improve upon human rights records in their country. On the basis of the above, and considering the constructive role Lebanon is positioned to play at the crossroads of civilizations and cultures in the region, the Government looks forward to enjoying the valuable support of all Permanent Missions to the United Nations for its candidature to the Human Rights Council.

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Note verbale dated 4 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat and has the honour to inform it that the Government of Uruguay has decided to put forward its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council at the election to be held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly on 9 May 2006.

Uruguay, as a founding member of the United Nations, wishes to reaffirm its satisfaction at the establishment of the new Human Rights Council, which is the embodiment of efforts to strengthen the United Nations system for promoting, respecting and protecting human rights.

The effective exercise of human rights and their enjoyment by the entire population is a central concern and a priority issue for the Uruguayan Government. The practical task of protecting human rights is primarily a national matter and is mainly the responsibility of the State. Nonetheless, it is essential that the State also enjoy the support of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in order to promote, protect and guarantee the full and effective exercise of human rights.

In the case of Uruguay, the essential elements for upholding the highest standards in promoting, respecting and protecting human rights have not only been enshrined in the National Constitution, but have also been regulated by law since 1825.

Uruguay has respected the human rights of its inhabitants throughout its history, with the sole exception of a period of military dictatorship between 1973 and 1985. As soon as democracy was re-established, its traditional respect for the human rights of all inhabitants was restored.

In the Government's view, the full realization of human rights cannot be achieved simply by adopting laws to protect them, and then mechanisms to ensure compliance with those laws. In order for such protection to be effective, people

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must be aware of their rights and of the mechanisms put in place to ensure that those rights are respected.

The delegation of Uruguay, which, like many other delegations, played a very active role in the negotiating process that culminated in the establishment of the Human Rights Council, supported the inclusion of "voluntary pledges and commitments" by candidates for membership in the Council, on the understanding that they represented a means of fostering compromise.

In keeping with an initiative of such importance, the Government of Uruguay wishes to make the following voluntary pledges and contributions to protect and promote human rights.

- Uruguay will ratify and accede to those international instruments which it has not yet ratified or to which it has not yet acceded.
- Uruguay will collaborate fully in the elaboration of any draft instruments that have not yet been concluded.
- Cooperation with the Human Rights Council. As part of the responsibilities to be assumed upon becoming a member of this new body, Uruguay pledges to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council, with the aim of ensuring that human rights questions assume their rightful place in the United Nations system.
- In this context, Uruguay will promote a spirit of cooperation and genuine dialogue with a view to ensuring that the Council's work focuses on cooperation, prevention and guaranteeing the protection of all individuals against human rights violations, at any time and under any circumstances, and in every region.
- Uruguay will gladly submit to the universal periodic review mechanism and help to develop its modalities.
- Substantive interaction with special procedures and mechanisms. As a country that has extended a standing invitation to the special thematic procedures of the Commission on Human Rights to visit the country, Uruguay pledges to collaborate fully with those procedures and to ensure that it remains open to international scrutiny.
- Uruguay will also promote the serious and responsible review and, where necessary, the improvement and rationalization of all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights in order to maintain a system of special procedures, expert advice and a complaint procedure.
- In this context, it will collaborate to ensure that all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, are treated on the same footing, on the understanding that human rights cannot be attained without ensuring sustainable human development based on equity and social justice.
- Uruguay will also promote the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, as pillars of the Council's work.

- Relationship with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Uruguay will continue to cooperate closely with OHCHR in its fulfilment of its mandate, with the aim of assisting it to address the wide range of human rights problems facing the international community, especially in the areas of technical assistance and capacity-building.

- Recognizing the fundamental role played by civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the human rights system, Uruguay pledges to ensure its effective participation in the Council, in accordance with practices observed by the Commission on Human Rights and with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

- Uruguay will work to ensure that the Council promotes the formulation and development of new multilateral laws in the field of human rights.

In accordance with the above, the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations would be grateful if the Secretariat would register Uruguay as a candidate for membership in the Human Rights Council during the election to be held on 9 May 2006.

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Note verbale dated 19 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him that the Government of Saudi Arabia has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at its first election, which will take place in May 2006.

Saudi Arabia has a confirmed commitment to the defence, protection and promotion of human rights. This commitment has been manifested in its performance as a member of the Commission on Human Rights. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia pursues a policy of active cooperation with international organizations in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Saudi Arabia is a party to eight international human rights instruments. Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to the work of the Human Rights Council and intends to make every endeavour to contribute to its deliberations and activities for the protection and promotion of human rights.

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